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British drama in Beijing

Selections from the Edinburgh drama festival are coming to Chinese campuses.

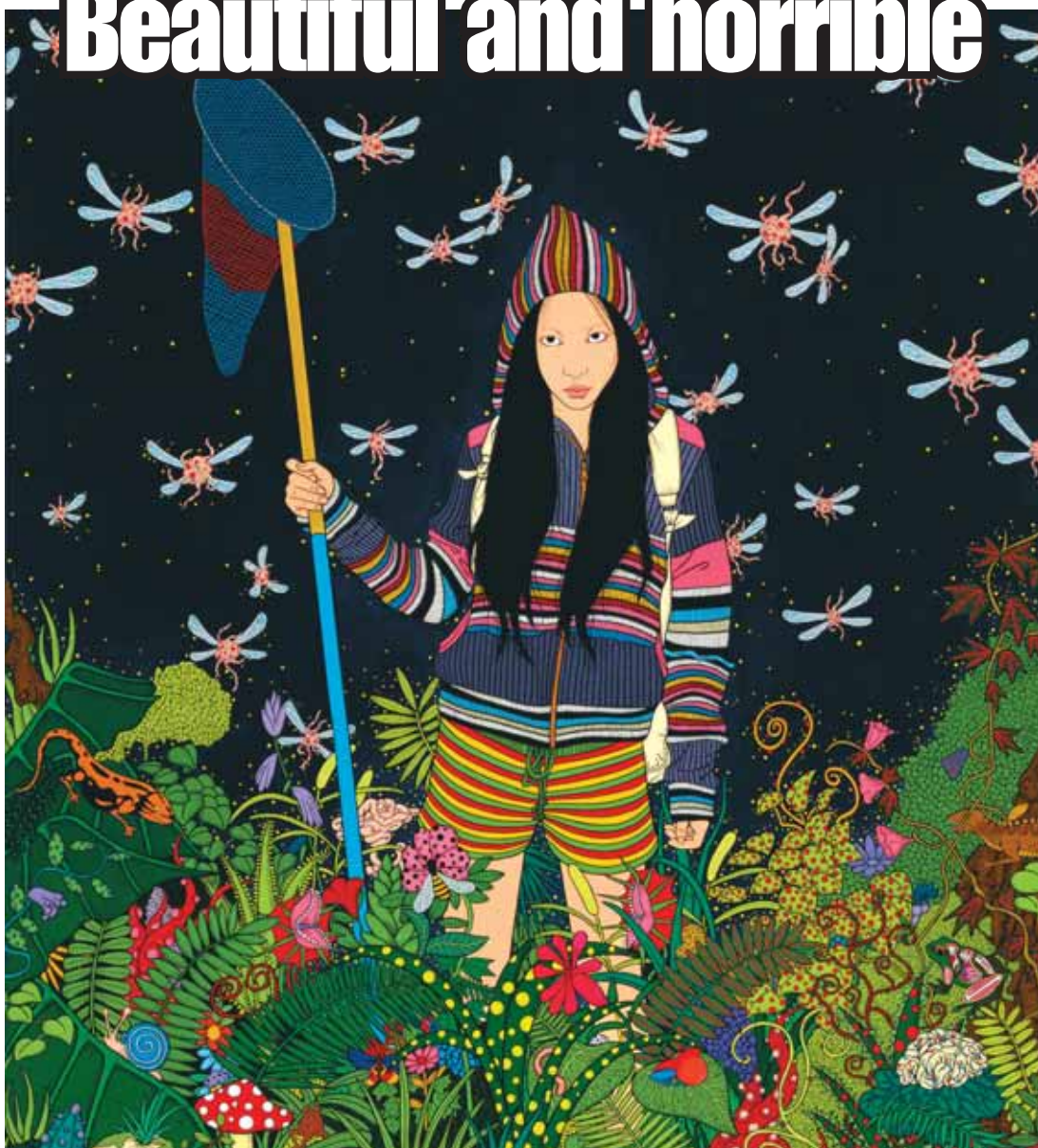


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Connecting with Germany

This year-long exhibition hopes to break through cross-cultural stereotypes.

Beautiful and horrible



Seeking a break from his pretentious peers, former film student Chen Fei took up professional painting. His art follows many of the

same storytelling concepts used in film, making his grotesque and colorful works easy to appreciate.

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City hikes fees on mixed garbage

By Zhao Hongyi

The city will begin penalizing residents who fail to sort their trash, according to a new bill passed by the Beijing Municipal Congress on Monday.

The new law would levy hefty fines on residents who refuse to begin sorting their trash when the system takes effect next March.

Charges would be tested on restaurants, bars and entertainment sites before expanding to the greater community, said Chen Lingming, deputy director of the Municipal Commission of City Administration and Environment.

"Fines for individual households are still being discussed, but should be finalized within a year," she said.

Street offices and township governments will be in charge of supervising trash collection.

Beijing has long called on its residents to sort their trash, and most communities have segregated garbage cans for recyclable and non-recyclable goods.

"With the penalties being put into the law, this will give us the power to punish and fine people who still refuse to sort their trash," Chen said.

The municipal commission decided to fine waste producers rather than collectors in hopes of discouraging people from pro-

ducing so much trash.

"Different provinces and municipalities have experimented with collection methods, like taxing each household according to its size," Chen said. "None of these have worked to encourage people to reduce how much waste they produce."

Restaurants and entertainment sites would have to sell their trash to qualified collectors or face fines of between 5,000 and 50,000 yuan for each infraction.

The bill requires trash collectors to show their supervisors how they collect and sort garbage. Those who fail to sort correctly would be fined 1,000 to 10,000 yuan for each infraction.

Those who have not been granted a license to collect trash could be fined 5,000 to 50,000 yuan for doing so anyway.

The final clause may be intended to clamp down on small waste traders who buy discarded food to extract waste oil, a phenomenon exposed by media groups in 2011.

Waste incinerators must also sort trash correctly or face fines of 50,000 to 100,000 yuan.

The municipal commission is calling on residents to report illegal collectors to its telephone hotlines and postal addresses.

"Once the report is confirmed, we will award the informant,"



The new law would levy hefty fines on residents who refuse to sort their trash.

CFP Photo

Chen Lingming said at the municipal congress Monday this week.

A large and comprehensive incinerator is currently being constructed and could be in use by 2015. The fine system is expected to be in place before it opens.

At present, each family pays 3 yuan for garbage collection, while migrant workers pay only 2 yuan. The charges are col-

lected from residential committees. The low prices do not bring in enough capital for the city to update its antiquated waste management facilities.

Most of the garbage collected in the city is buried, with only a handful being treated by experimental incinerators located outside Sixth Ring Road.

"Many people are pouring

into Beijing in hopes of finding a better life," said Wang Jun, a professor of social science at Peking University. "Their additional trash is part of the price."

Wang said he expects the cost of living to continue to climb throughout the decade.

"It's better if people can learn to form good habits now," he said.

Microbloggers top 300 million

By Han Manman

China's microblogging community has broken the 300 million mark, according to statistics released Monday at the 11th China Internet Media Forum in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

The country has seen a boom in the platform during the last two years – to the extent that the government is actively endorsing microblogs as a way to keep officials connected to the people they represent.

The Beijing municipal government launched a news release platform last week on Sina Weibo, the most popular microblog service with more than 200 million users.

Twenty municipal government agencies, such as the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics and the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, are streaming new policies and regulations and transcripts of press conferences to the joint microblog, said Wang Hui, head of the municipal government's information office.

Microblogs give people a chance to interact with representatives on various issues. On hot issues, the government assigned spokespersons to make timely responses to social concerns, Wang said.

"We are not just making a show. We are sincere in answering the public's concerns," Wang said.

But microblogs have a darker role as the birthplace of lies and rumors.

"China is facing the new challenge of reining in bad content on microblogs to ensure discussion stays civil," said Qian Xiaolian, deputy head of the State Council Information Office.

Qian said the government will enforce existing laws and regulations to punish people who use microblogs to spread lies, rumors and pornography, and subsequently threaten online information security.

Four people have been punished to date for spreading rumors about a group of HIV/AIDS carriers attempting to deliberately transmit the virus by contaminat-

ing foods, said a spokesman at the regional public security department on Tuesday.

The four, all from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, have apologized for spreading the rumor on microblogs, QQ and other online forums.

While the government is considering how to regulate microblogs, some operators have started to combat false information on their own.

Sina Weibo filters searches for sensitive keywords, posting denials of certain rumors and freezes the accounts of users who post false information.

Sina has been working on new ways to prevent rumors from spreading on its microblog site, said Liu Qi, vice general manager of the company's marketing department.

One idea is a system similar to those used by online-commerce sites, where one user can view another's history and rating level to check their credibility, he said.



China is struggling to rein in bad content on microblogs and ensure discussion stays civil.

CFP Photo

Shichahai applies for UNESCO recognition

By Zhao Hongyi

Shichahai, the northernmost end of the Grand Canal connecting Hangzhou and Beijing, is currently under renovation as the municipal government prepares to submit the area for consideration as a UNESCO World Heritage.

But that is bad news for the area's residential communities and shops, many of which will be evicted or demolished to ensure the "historical look" of the area, according to sources from the Shichahai Management Office under Xicheng District Government.

The municipal government allocated 370 million yuan for the project in its 2012 budget.

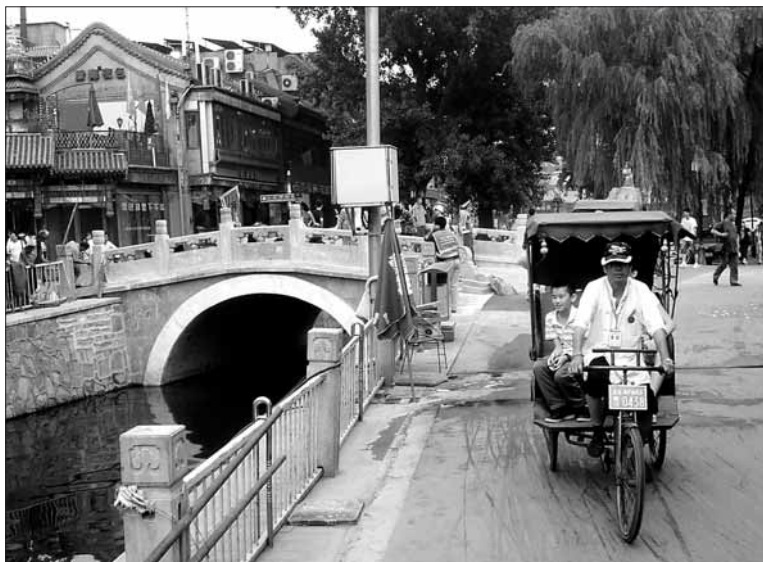
The 323-hectare Shichahai area was a harbor market in the 139 years between 1293 and 1432, when the harbor dried up.

At that time, the canal was the only convenient and low-cost transportation route between the south and north.

In the Qing Dynasty, the area became the site of many princes' and generals' lavish mansions, as well as several temples and nunneries. After the People's Republic was founded in 1949, many senior officials and generals lived in the area's courtyards.

The office plans to replace the 4,800 meter-long steel rails, set up as a safety precaution in the early 1990s, with new marble railing.

Restoration and renovation



Many residential communities and shops will be evicted or demolished to ensure the "historical look" of the area. CFP Photo

will include the Yindian Bridge, Lotus Market and Guanghua Temple. The Zhenwu Temple, Yongquan Nunnery and Tianshou Nunnery, currently occupied by residents, will be cleaned out and restored.

Guanghua Temple used to have a pool where people could free captive animals, an important tradition in Buddhism. Currently it is in a yard occupied by the Ministry of Health, but the city expects to recover it and open it to the public in the next few years.

The 28 small streets and

alleys, like Xiaojing and Xiaobanjie lanes, around the area will also be restored before 2014 – when the government hopes to submit the entire length of the canal for inclusion.

Last month, the government reopened the Great Qing Dynasty Post Office on Yandaixie Street. Despite its ancient appearance, it provides modern postal services.

"In the next few years, more shops and outlets like this will appear," said Xu Jin, a representative of the management office.

The area will be divided

into five segments: a creative cultural block around the Yindian Bridge that focuses on historical and folk arts; a service block on Huguosi Street that collects local dishes; an entertainment block by the Lotus Market; a block of luxury restaurants on Deshengmen Inner Avenue; and a folklore block by the Dajinsi and Xiaojinsi hutong with traditional courtyards.

The management office plans to create a water treatment plant in the center of Xihai and Shichahai to process waste water before dis-

charging it into the lakes.

The past decade has seen the restoration of many of the area's historic sites, including Prince Kung's Mansion, the Temple of the Fire God, the Temple of Grand Morality, the Huitong Temple and the Guo Shoujing Museum.

At the start of 2011 the office revoked the plates of hundreds of tourist tricycles in the area. The plates will be reissued after inspection of the company and valid for three years.

The move was an attempt to combat price gouging, as many tricycle drivers have been cheating foreign tourists and ignoring the area's standardized prices.

The Great Canal stretches 1,794 kilometers and connects the Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze and Qiantang rivers. It is the longest canal in the world, and its earliest sections date back some 2,500 years.

The world heritage application procedure is expected to conclude in 2014.

Preparations for the UNESCO bid began a decade ago. It is expected to be accepted, as the canal winds through the most developed and prosperous eastern coastal provinces and connects countless other cultural treasures.

At present, China has 31 world heritage sites. Five of these – the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven and the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian – are in Beijing.

'Desperate housewives' hope school's wife classes can save marriage

By Han Manman

For many wives who are struggling with their marriage, money is not a big issue – especially if it can save their marriage.

That's why many are spending 100,000 yuan on a new training course from Good Wife Happy School.

Records from the Ministry of Civil Affairs show that 4.5 million couples divorced in 2010, an 11 percent increase from 2009. Many commentators are now saying it appears harder than ever for couples to stick together.

Good Wife Happy School claims to aid women who worry that their marriages are crumbling

apart. It is one of China's first such training schools to offer an "anti-mistress" program.

The school, run by a local company called Beijing Love Giving Culture Development, has an annual tuition fee of 100,000 yuan for students.

Yang Qing, from the media department of the school, said that although the first semester begins next March, it has already received many inquiries.

"Many of them have asked about the details of the course. It seems they are very in need of a solution," Yang said.

Unlike other wife training classes, which teach skills such as cooking and flower

arrangement, Yang said the 100,000-yuan course focuses on emotional cognition with half-month programs in conflict mediation and ways to prevent your husband from finding a mistress.

"Our school will also provide one year of follow-up consultative services," she said.

Fei Yang, president of both the company and school, said her anti-mistress school is intended for rich wives who want to keep their marriage stable.

"The presence of a mistress is not what leads to broken marriages," Fei said, noting that a mistress is a symptom of a failing marriage

rather than a cause.

Fei said women play a leading role in marriage and should contribute more to their relationship.

Similar wife training courses have sprung up in major cities such as Zhengzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai. Most target middle- and upper-class women.

The Beijing Moral Education Center for Women also offers marriage guidance for both single and married women. Among its services is a 30-hour course for 20,000 yuan on how to snare a millionaire, which features classes in make-up, conver-

sation, personality development and tea serving.

Though the wife training industry is booming, many worry that the trend will lead society to take a more utilitarian view of marriage.

Sociologist Li Yinhe said the programs are comparatively backward, and a symptom of the country's gender-based income gap, which results in the brides of the wealthy becoming full-time housewives.

"Without any personal income, housewives are bound to feel anxious about their marriage," she said. "This shows just how far society has to go before achieving true gender equality."

Saturation, expansion sink group buying businesses

By Zhang Dongya

Meteorologists may claim the season is having unusually warm temperatures, but the fledgling group purchase industry is facing an extremely cold winter.

Many small websites shut down during the past two months, and bigger firms have shuttered their branches, sacked employees, slashed wages and cut benefits. After two years of prosperity, trouble has come to the group purchase model.



55tuan, one of the Top 10 group purchase websites, fired more than half its employees in October. The company claimed it was normal "optimization," but insiders say it betrays the bad situation of the industry.

CFP Photos

Tightening market

The group purchase explosion began last March, when Meituan closed its first deal. By October 2011, more than 5,000 group purchase websites had opened to cash in on the trend.

But the explosion has slowed to a trickle. In September, only 19 new group purchase websites were registered. Worse yet, the big players seem to be in retreat.

Manzuo closed 312 of its branches, leaving only 41 in operation, and slashed employee pay by 25 to 50 percent. Many departments had their bonuses cut, which for many meant a loss of one third of their pay. The company itself relocated to a low-cost office in Jiuxian-qiao in October.

That's scary given that a survey conducted by Tuan800, a ranker of group purchase websites, showed Manzuo ranked fourth in sales as of September.

This month, 24quan closed its branch in Huai'an, Jiangsu Province and scurried away in the night, leaving hundreds of thousands of local merchants holding the debt.

24quan fired some 3,000 of its 5,000 employees and closed branches all over the country during the last two months.

Both Manzuo and 24quan were among China's Top 10 group purchase websites. Small and medium players



American giant Groupon went public in New York in November, but the group purchase industry faces a murky future in China.

like Ximi and Youpin have already declared bankruptcy and closed down.

Industrial minefield

Rex felt lucky when he heard that group purchase companies were experiencing such a big shake-up. He worked in brand promotion for one of the big players from last March, when it was founded, and left at the end of 2010.

"There are many problems in the industry. Although they offered a high salary, I saw little hope for the future," he said.

During the months Rex worked for the group pur-

chase website, the company and industry were expanding at a breakneck pace.

"It developed too rapidly. Within several months, they had recruited thousands of employees and set up hundreds of branches around the country," he said.

"Monthly costs climbed to 15 million yuan, and they were throwing away money by advertising in the subways. The three PR companies working with the brand were billing them for 300,000 yuan each month."

Almost overnight, the group purchase companies moved from advertising in subways to advertising on television. Many people with no experience in E-business hopped into the industry in hopes of getting a share.

"It turned 'abnormal' last September. Employees were being offered pay raises and welfare – especially the employees working in marketing and brand promotion department. But that was really unrealistic," Rex said.

He voiced opposition to the high-cost expansion but was shot down.

"I saw too many perils."

The local group purchase websites based in Beijing have had problems branching out to other regions. The people they sent to other provinces made little headway.

At some branch websites in small cities like Wujiang in Jiangsu Province and Handan in Hebei Province, the items

available for group purchase were limited to products people could purchase anywhere – never local products or services.

The rapid expansion has made many early investors comparatively cautious.

Rex said investors have started pressuring the companies to meet their targets, putting even great financial pressure on the new businesses.

"With Chinese New Year's coming up, the cash flow will be tighter than ever during the next two months," he said.

Dimming business

Of the Top 10 group purchase websites, only Ftuan received a cash injection of US \$60 million (381 million yuan) in the fourth quarter.

Other companies were cautious about changes in the industry.

Nuomi, founded last June, remains in the Top 10 but has fewer than 900 employees.

Its manager Shen Boyang said they will continue to hold the staff count below 1,000 after a new recruitment drive at the end of the year.

"Our competitors are throwing money at advertising and expansion. For us to succeed, we need to avoid getting caught up in the craze and make small and steady progress," Shen said Tuesday. He said his company is considering cooperating in new cities, but remains

very cautious about their market potential.

That's no surprise, given the whole group purchase industry is losing profits. The rate of gross profits crashed from 20 percent to less than 5 percent in the span of 2011.

Poor performance by group purchase companies has cast a melancholy mood over the entire e-business market this year.

Bi Sheng, the CEO of online shoe seller Letao, called Chinese e-business a "fraud."

"It is a 'bottom' industry. Doing the business is like diving, because you can only sink. When you are nearly submerged, some investor throws you money and you emerge from the water. Then you sink again while you wait for the next investment," he said.

"Death comes when the rich people stop throwing money."

Letao cut its advertising budget by 80 percent and is considering making transformations as soon as possible.

The Tuesday after Bi's comments, 360buy Jingdong Mall, China's biggest online retailer, declared an end to its popular free shipping policy, charging an extra 5 yuan for all orders of less than 39 yuan.

Liu Qiangdong, CEO of 360buy, said on his microblog it was a necessary move even though people would complain.

"E-business needs to survive another five years to have a future," he said.

When homes become affordable



| 序号 | 房号 | 面积 (m²) | 单价 (元/m²) | 总价 |
|----|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | 4-3308 | 64.75 | 659 | 42700 |
| 2 | 2-2504 | 105.96 | 872 | 92400 |
| 3 | 2-3309 | 81.75 | 8245 | 67600 |
| 4 | 3-3209 | 83.20 | | |

Many are afraid the property bubble may cause a crash. An Xin/CFP Photo

The country's housing prices fell for the first time this year in October, a sign that efforts to cool the country's surging property market are working, according to Reuters.

Statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics said that average new home prices across the country last month fell 0.2 percent from September, the first drop since Reuters started calculating

the index in January.

In Shanghai, new home prices fell 0.2 percent in October from the previous month, the first drop in 13 months.

Across China, new home prices fell in 33 of 70 major cities. But the falling values of real estate investments sparked protests in recent weeks in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities.

(Agencies)

The third eye

Home prices fall, but can it be a crash?

By Huang Daohen

It might be good news for the mass public as homes are becoming affordable. But to property developers and the market, that can signal trouble ahead.

Since September, investors, both institutional and individual buyers, started dumping the shares of domestic property developers. Many are worried that under the current cooling environment, home prices will halve in the coming months.

Even conservative analysts believe there will be another 10 to 20 percent decline next year.

That could cause panic in the market, said Steve Wen, senior analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing. "It's like China will become the next Dubai and the housing bubble will finally burst," he said.

Developers started to lose their nerve as some struggling property firms offered large discounts and created astounding promotion measures to attract potential buyers.

According to local media in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, a local developer gave away free BMWs for its first 150 buyers. Others also provided free iPhones and luxury bags as gifts.

"They want to sell their new homes faster and try to liquidate their assets," Wen said. But he believed that would come at a cost: while developers are slashing their costs, the quality of homes won't improve.

The price decline has also led to several protests among recent homebuyers as they suffer losses even before moving in.

In August, a crowd of about 50 people in Tongzhou District demonstrated against their developer. They bought the same homes only several months earlier, then saw the prices drop 20 percent.

Market watchers like Wen believed the government would relax tightening measures like prohibitions on second-home purchases.

They were wrong.

Premier Wen Jiabao reaffirmed at a State Council conference that the government would continue to strictly implement real estate policies in the coming months.

Steve Wen, however, said he has confidence in the central government's policy. A sharp housing price decline won't be permitted to happen because real estate prices are important for social stability, he said.

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Siemens customers smash fridges in protest



Luo Yonghao (right) and other angry customers use hammers to smash Siemens refrigerators at the company's China headquarters in Beijing.

Fu Zengkai/CFP Photo

Hammer time

Luo Yonghao has a message for foreign companies selling products in China: offer good customer support or the hammers are coming out.

Sledgehammers to be exact.

Luo, 47, is founder of an English language school and the outspoken blog Bullog.cn. He had a simple enough problem: some months ago, his refrigerator door broke and just wouldn't stay shut.

But his annoyance was compounded by the fact that the fridge was manufactured by Siemens, a global brand with a strong tradition for quality and design.

Luo contacted his local Siemens customer service center in Beijing and described the problem with the fridge he had purchased three years ago – incidentally, his washing machine bought at the same time had also broken and required repair.

However, after much back-and-forth, Siemens denied any issues with the design or assembly of Luo's refrigerator and refused to replace the faulty product.

Ultimately, Luo would file several complaints with Siemens which the company continually dismissed.

That was enough for the blogger, who took to Sina Weibo to vent his frustrations with the matter.

Having built a following of over 1.2 million users on Weibo, thanks to his popular laid-back and often amusing English language classes, Luo's complaints spread quickly throughout the Chinese Web and churned up a storm of rage from other Siemens fridge owners.

The discussion became a groundswell of frustration over Siemens' public non-handling of the issue, all of which came to a head this past Sunday when Luo organized a group of affected fridge owners outside of Siemens' headquarters in Beijing to smash apart three of the faulty refrigerators with sledgehammers.

Holding signs that said, "[We] gently demand that Siemens acknowledge and solves the problem," the group submitted a letter to Siemens urging the company to acknowledge the technical issue and to improve its customer service in China.

Siemens, for its part, accepted the letter from the protestors, but also called police in to deal with them. The company later issued its own letter that did not detail any plans for compensation, but noted that production of the said refrigerators had been outsourced to a third-party manufacturer in China.

These incidents reflect the upward economic mobility of China's new consumers and their increasing expectation on high-quality products and customer service.

Unfair for customers

The bad public relations from this incident were eerily similar to the Toyota recall of 2009-10, in which millions of the company's cars were recalled globally.

At that time, Chinese customers were outraged when reports of Toyota's customer service towards buyers in regions like the US and Europe did not match their own experience on the mainland, where 75,000 vehicles were affected.

As one local news report about the China recall notes, Toyota employees in the US were required to either personally remove affected cars or pay the travel expenses for those customers returning the cars themselves. Replacement cars were also supposed to be offered for free.

In China, affected car owners were required to drive the cars to dealers themselves and were offered no compensation. Replacement cars were only provided to those who had cars that could not be fixed quickly, an additional problem that was compounded by a shortage of required parts.

The inequality angered Chinese consumers, who had already dealt with six previous recalls the year before on Toyota cars sold in China that affected

nearly 1 million vehicles.

"The way Toyota has treated Chinese customers is different from how it conducted itself in the US," said Zheng Yumin, head of the Zhejiang provincial industry and commerce administration at the time.

"It's unfair for Chinese customers," Zheng said.

More fridge smashing?

A recent post by the head of consulting firm McKinsey & Company's China offices noted the rising importance of customer service for Chinese consumers. Polls showed that among China's luxury consumers, the expectation of quality customer service had risen from 17 percent to 30 percent in 2010, and that two out of three consumers said they were disappointed with poor service received in China.

Similarly, an Economist Intelligence Unit study of customer service found that despite improved numbers over the years, China has Asia's least satisfied consumers, with 63 percent saying they would immediately switch brands if they received poor customer service from a company.

This should worry Siemens, which is still well-regarded in China as it grapples with the unexpected blow dealt by Luo and his online army.

For his part, Luo hopes that their complaints are dealt with promptly by Siemens.

However, should he be ignored again, Luo has already warned that more fridge smashings will follow.

"If Siemens won't fix this, I'll rent a big space in 798 [Art Zone] and hand out free hammers," Luo wrote on his Weibo account. "Then more victims can come and smash their refrigerators up."

(Agencies)

Competition makes accounting cool

By Huang Daohen

Accounting doesn't have to be about endless calculation and stodgy figures. As the demand for CPAs (certified public accounts) runs high, the industry is trying to make the profession attractive to new recruits.

The Hong Kong Institute of CPA (HK CPA) recently hosted a Qualification Program (QP) case analysis competition at the Westin Hotel in Beijing, giving up-and-coming students some hands-on experience.

As many as 312 universities from across the country applied to send teams to the event, which was launched in Hong Kong in 2002. After months of competition, eight teams were selected. Students were asked to investigate and analyze a specific business case for a corporation.

The winner last Sunday was Peking University. Central University of Finance came in second, and North China Electric Power University and Shenzhen University tied for third place.

This was the third QP competition sponsored on the Chinese mainland by the HK ICPA.

Susanna Chiu, a council member of HK ICPA and head of the judging panel, called the event the Oscars of accounting. By participating in the competition, students developed business skills and professional judgment, she said.

"It was a chance to prepare for their future careers," Chiu said.

The demand for talented accountants has exploded on the mainland as massive foreign direct investment (FDI) pours in and domestic companies rush out.

But poor training and different accounting and auditing standards have left a shortage of qualified CPAs, Chiu said.

That has led to a market dominated by the Big Four: KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young and Deloitte & Touche.

Chiu said HK ICPA has worked out multiple training plans with mainland authorities.

In 2006, the HK ICPA announced it opened an office in Beijing, its first on the mainland, and signed an agreement to cooperate with the Chinese Institute of CPA to help 1,500 mainland accountants obtain Hong Kong qualifications by 2016.

Hou Jiayi, from the Peking University team, said the competition was a good opportunity for students like him to get real world experience.

He said one only gains technical knowledge from books and that what's needed is training in how to apply that knowledge.

Rebuild Yuanmingyuan – again?



Dashuifa, a set of fountains in the Old Summer Palace, is an iconic ruin.

AJing/CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

On October 16, two deputies from the Beijing Municipal Congress proposed rebuilding Yuanmingyuan – the Summer Palace, which was already rebuilt once after the original was destroyed during the Second Opium War – in the northwest corner of the city.

Two days after it was reported by the local media, the public weighed in with both passionate support and opposition.

The 350-hectare Old Yuanmingyuan was a royal garden built during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It took nearly 150 years for the dynasty to finish building the garden, which was filled with treasures.

In 1860, British and French troops occupied Yuanmingyuan, ransacked and razed it. What remained of the garden was completely looted and destroyed in 1900 during the Eight-Nation Alliance invasion.

That explains why so many Chinese

royal artifacts can be found in European auctions today.

Emperor Tongzhi, the son of the emperor who escaped Beijing when invaders entered the capital in 1860, ordered the palace rebuilt a decade after the fire.

But the teenager's mother, the Empress Dowager, and his uncles blocked the order.

This was not the first time the city's congress has proposed rebuilding Old Yuanmingyuan. Experts and scholars suggested it in the 1980s, but the proposal received little attention.

In 2007, Xu Wenlong, the boss of Hengdian Film and Studio Center in Zhejiang Province, said he would offer 20 billion yuan for the reconstruction of Yuanmingyuan. His proposal was ignored.

The man constructed a replica of Yuanmingyuan at his studio in Zhejiang instead. His park has received a steady stream of visitors since opening last year.

People's Daily, the largest daily newspaper in China, condemned the replica Yuanmingyuan as "a really bad idea."

The latest proposal received support from many relics experts who believe this is part of the government's efforts to focus on promoting Chinese culture.

The official management office of Old Yuanmingyuan is among the supporters.

"We can select some parts of the palace to rebuild, to give visitors a comparison of the ruins and the rebuilt structures," said office director Chen Mingjie.

The municipal congress said on Wednesday that it will focus on recovering cultural, historical and spiritual items that were lost more than 100 years ago.

The Management Office of Yuanmingyuan has produced a 3D digital film introducing the royal palace. Visitors can download or watch the film at yuanmingyuanpark.com.

Comment

Can you recover history?

The ruins of Yuanmingyuan have become a symbol, a relic of history itself. You can't recover the original construction, the treasures and the history. Why can't we use the money in the promotion of culture and other aspects, which I believe is more important than this bad idea?

– Mao Jianguo, commentator, Xinhua News Agency

Maintaining the ruins is best plan

Maintaining the ruins of Yuanmingyuan is the best idea. It reminds us of the miseries our ancestors experienced and inspires us to seek out why they were defeated. Such shame and misery is worth remembering, and more valuable than a new Yuanmingyuan, which I believe will have a circus feel.

– Liao Baoping, commentator, Yangcheng Evening News

What a stupid idea

I cannot help wondering whether the proposers of this idea are dumb and irresponsible. The proposal is the result of deputies, scholars and officials out for their own benefits. It's a shame that we cannot elect deputies. We should cast a national referendum on this issue and hear what the public has to say.

– Yang Jinwen, engineer, EDF Beijing

Yuanmingyuan will disappear within five years

After nearly 150 years of natural erosion by wind, sun and rain, many parts of the ruins are damaged. If we don't spare money to rebuild part of the ruins now, so-called Yuanmingyuan will disappear in the next five years. Many parts are currently occupied by office buildings, restaurants and schools. A restoration is badly needed.

– Liu Yang, Yuanmingyuan Management Office

Debate of the week

Professor vs. film star

A philosophy professor at Shanghai-based Fudan University voiced his disappointment and objection to the school's priorities after 35 of his students were authorized to skip class to serve as security for a film promotion.

Zhang Qingxiong, the philosophy professor at one of the country's top universities, wrote a critical article on the university's academic committee website. Zhang inquired into the decision made by the university to give celebrities higher priority than educators.

The inquiry can be traced back to November 10 during a film promotion of *The Great Magician*, starring

Hong Kong actors Tony Leung and Sean Andy, at the university.

That afternoon, 35 students from Zhang's class were asked by the student union to maintain order at the event. The students were not granted permission by the office of Academic Affairs and Department of Philosophy.

Zhang returned to the classroom to find all his students had left except for the captain of the armed student police force waiting to inform the professor of the reason for the empty classroom.

Zhang was astonished and irate. "Over the past years, I have never felt angrier than today," he said.

But what annoyed Zhang more is that students nowadays have changed attitudes toward academics, as they are more focused on celebrities.

Boss encourages employee suicide threat

A manager at a Shenzhen bra factory reportedly told one of her employees to "jump [off a building] and die," leading employees to reveal the unfair and illegal working conditions forced upon them.

Employees at Top Form International became furious with their manager after she instructed one of her employees to commit suicide.

Reporters found that employees in the company are forced to work overtime without extra pay. When one reporter approached some of the employees, they refused to talk about the incident, fearing the surveillance monitors scattered around

the factory. However, when they left their workplace they began to inform reporters about the case.

According to employees, an employee became angry with her situation, ran to the top floor and threatened to jump. The manager responded by saying, "Don't worry, she won't jump."

Those who witnessed the incident were infuriated by the manager's cold-bloodedness and decided to begin a protest. One of the employees said that since 2008 she had received only 500 yuan per month as base pay, less than the minimum wage set by the local government. She also earns a commission based on the number of bras she produces.

This February, however, base pay was cancelled and all salary began to come from commission. (**Agencies**)

Australian couple promotes public art for locals

By Han Manman

For many, art seems like a lofty concept, to be glimpsed only at museums or performance centers. But some believe the true test of art is how much of it is absorbed into daily life.

Australian couple Tiffany Hambley and Andrew Toland belongs to that latter group. Using the city and its culture as their source material, the couple tries to reflect on the city and the changes taking place within.



Tiffany Hambley and Andrew Toland

Beijing T-shirt project

"Do you believe people can have a silent conversation with the city and with each other?" Hambley asked a local who was looking at a wall on which hung more than a hundred T-shirts, each with words written on them.

Hambley, 33, is one of 11 artists who participated in the Urban Play public art exhibition in Landgent Center that began last week.

Featuring installations, videos, performances and sound art, the exhibition is an attempt to create a new experiment in art within the urban space and explore urban reality from an artistic point of view.

In the past three months, Hambley has traveled the highways, streets and alleys of Beijing to collect interesting slogans written on T-shirts.

"Nobody notices me writing down their T-shirt slogan, but I think some people have wondered why I stare so intently at their chests," she said.

One of the slogans that really caught her attention was a T-shirt worn by a fashionable young woman walking down Wangfujing shopping street. It was a phrase from American comic Louis C.K.: "Everything is amazing and nobody is happy."

"This was a T-shirt that had a really big impact on me. It makes you stop and wonder about the deeper meaning of these T-shirts," she said.

For Hambley, the presence of the T-shirt slogans is part of what makes this city so interesting and refreshing.

"The most surprising thing for me was that the cool slogans are not all worn by young people. I saw lots of interesting T-shirts being worn by older people, including grandparents," she said.

"From my project, I would like to show people that printed language is another part of the urban environment we live in, and to encourage people to keep their eyes open to the small daily mysteries that make life in Beijing so rich and compelling," she said.

Public art as dialogue

Hambley's husband, 35-year-



Hambley believes the presence of T-shirt slogans is part of what makes this city so interesting and refreshing.



Toland's "Beijing Obscura"

Photos provided by Andrew Toland

old Toland, also participated in the exhibition.

Toland is an architectural designer and his particular interest is promoting public understanding of and appreciation for architecture.

He presented "Beijing Obscura," an installation of three interlocking pyramids, each of which functions as a camera obscura, a device for projecting images from outside the room onto surfaces inside the container.

According to Urban Play's press release, "As visitors enter the pavilion they are confronted with a series of blurry images projected onto the floor. These images are real-time projections of the world they have just left outside captured by the

three camera obscuras."

"Modern Beijing is represented as a fractured, merging, inverted dream-world of living pictures within the darkened, reflective space of the camera obscura container," Toland said.

For the couple, showing art publicly offers the opportunity for a kind of dialogue without language barriers.

Toland said it was interesting to see the various responses from the public.

"People would often stop and ask us what we were doing, and even though we speak only a little Chinese, we would do our best to explain," he said. "These interactions were very valuable to us and allowed us to engage directly with our audience."

The couple said they loved interacting with Beijing residents and workers and they believe art should reach ordinary people.

"If art exists only in a gallery, then only people who regularly visit galleries will see it," Toland said. "Public art is art that ordinary people might be able to encounter in their everyday lives."

He said in Australia, there are a number of good public art initiatives. Even though it is a relatively young nation, Australia is developing a sense of its own distinct culture.

Beijing is a big city with a great number of creative people from around China and the world, so it should have more public art shows, he said, adding that there is a great opportunity for Beijing to channel the creative energies of the many people living here.

"This will require more skilled and visionary curators with an interest in public art, and organizations with authority over public space – either businesses like the Landgent Center or the local government – to see the value of public art and give more opportunities," he said.

Creative path

Toland and Hambley, both

from Sydney, have loved creative activities since they were young. Hambley wrote stories from a young age and won several prizes and awards, while Toland loved art and architecture. His father was an architect, and the young boy liked seeing his drawings and models.

They met on the first day of law school and started to fall in love when they realized how many interests they shared.

After completing their law degrees and working for several years, they felt like they wanted to do something more creative in their lives.

The two decided to give up their law careers. Hambley pursued writing while Toland became an architect.

"We have been a couple for almost 15 years, and we feel very lucky to have met each other when we were so young," Toland said. "We were able to encourage one another to take greater risks in life and seek a more creative path."

The two are currently in Australia and considering a move to Beijing.

"We are now looking for longer-term opportunities that might allow us to come back to live in Beijing in the future," Toland said.

British Council brings Edinburgh drama festival to universities



A workshop as part of the Edinburgh International Drama Festival

By Chu Meng

The British Council, responsible for cultural and educational exchange under the British embassy in Beijing, held a workshop as part of the Edinburgh International Drama Festival at Peking University's School of Arts last Saturday.

Chinese drama critic Shui Jing, director Tian Qinxin and Cui Yang, president of China Milky Way Productions Company, shared their experiences from the Edinburgh drama festival in the UK.

From August 22 to 27, the three led a Chinese delegation to Edinburgh, Scotland as part of the British Council's long-term bilateral cultural exchange program called China-UK Connections Through Culture (CTC).

During their six days abroad, they watched about 30 works from mainstream and avant-garde directors. Directors, critics and agents from China and the UK participated in roundtable talks and business meetings as well.

At the same time, British counterparts were invited to China to show their latest works. They were asked to share their experiences at professional institutes and universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macau.

Zhu Haining, CTC Beijing program manager, said the Edinburgh drama festival workshop, called "Edinburgh Showcase," was initiated in 2008. It happens every other year and aims to broaden the minds of young Chinese playwrights, directors and actors, as well as to attract more agents and investors.

"It's a unique opportunity for international promoters seeking to engage with UK theater to see a handful of productions, including three installations in just one week,

within the exhilarating setting of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival," Tian told workshop participants, who were mostly liberal arts students.

For the first time, the workshop included artist interviews and critical debates that sought to contextualize the creation and presentation of works, Shui said.

"Edinburgh Showcase was an excellent opportunity for us to see new British drama," she said. She was impressed by *Roadkill*, a play about sex trafficking, and David Greig's *Monster in the Hall*, a musical about a teenager coping with her father's multiple sclerosis.

Yuan Hong, a producer and promoter of avant-garde theater in China, shared his insight into UK theater and talked about his participation in the 2009 and 2011 Edinburgh Showcase.

"My biggest impression from Edinburgh was that...small productions, like 10-minute dramas, which are very popular in the UK today, can also win an audience. That's not how China is now," he said.

The showcase also introduced online content that aims to expand the British Council's reach.

The council is preparing free iPhone and iPad apps as well that use GPS tracking to follow showcase artists as they tour internationally. Users will also be able to comment and review shows.

"The digital elements break new ground by giving some of the UK's most innovative performing artists a global platform like never before," said Brendan Griggs, head of the drama and dance department at the British Council's headquarters in the UK. "Furthermore, they offer more ways of engaging with the artists and their works worldwide."



A play by Nick Flintoff called The Animals and Children.

Photos provided by the British Council



The Dark Philosophers by Toby Farrow

Greener houses make cold, bad air more bearable

By Annie Wei

On yet another of Beijing's gray-sky days, a salesman at Shundan home appliance store in Sanlitun was having a particularly easy time selling air purifiers.

"There's only one or two of this model left," he said. "More orders will arrive next week."

In recent years, purifiers and ionizers have sold briskly thanks to the real estate boom. While that market has slowed down, sales of air cleaners have not, thanks to a new factor: pollution.

Today, even long-time Beijingers are finding the air quality unbearable.

"I woke up in the middle of the night feeling choked," said Sophie Su, a corporate accountant who rents an apartment for 10,000 yuan a month with her husband in the central business district. She ended up buying a 3,000-yuan air purifier last week, and said the results were noticeable.

Chen Juan, who returned to Beijing last week after spending a year in suburban Hangzhou, found that the polluted air made her drowsy.

"It's hard to feel spirited up here," she said, "especially in the winter."

It doesn't help that central heating has just turned on, resulting in office workers feeling extra sleepy after lunch.

It's to this backdrop that a small group of individuals in Beijing have decided to do something substantial. They're investing their money in an eco-friendly house that saves energy in addition to circulating clean air and maintaining a steady room temperature.

New location, new style

After a significant rent hike at his old Nanluogu Xiang location, Chow King Tai, from Hong Kong, had to look for a new place for his Korean restaurant *Saveurs de Coree*.

Chow ended up getting more than a new location. One of his regulars introduced him to architect Erk Schaffarczyk.

"Our former location was in an old hutong house, and we had a lot of bad experiences because of issues like leaking water, poor drainage and poor heating in winter," Chow said.

One wintry month, Chow paid 6,000 yuan for electricity.

"It's not like we can't operate the business with problems like that, but it was a burden to continue doing that for five years," he said.

Citing an example of leaking water, he said, "It's not like you can always find the right

person to fix it immediately."

As he was planning *Saveurs de Coree*'s new location, he was aiming to build something more sustainable.

An old customer told him the architect Schaffarczyk was designing her courtyard home. Chow gave him a call.

"My main concern was that they must be very expensive and I could not afford it," Chow said.

That turned out to not be the case.

"He thought of a plan to save me money," Chow said.

Eco-building

Schaffarczyk, director of Purple Leaf, a consulting and eco-building design firm, has lived in China for 10 years. He has a rather uncomplicated design theory.

"It's like how people kept warm in the old times – they wore layers of clothing," he said. His designs basically add layers of "clothing" onto buildings.

What's most important, Schaffarczyk said, is that buildings must be airtight so that a human body's temperature can help heat up the room.

Nearly a decade ago, real estate developers had the same thinking. But implementation



A zero-energy urban courtyard room off Nanluogu Xiang

Photos by Erk Schaffarczyk/Oak Tailor Smith

was where they went wrong.

Developers often settled for low-cost builders who bungled blueprints and offset the advantages of eco-friendly designs.

Schaffarczyk said most apartment buildings in Beijing are not airtight, meaning heat seeps out and dirty air seeps in.

One of his firms recent projects was building a courtyard house using local material and preserving the old structure. The goal was to make it pollution-free and optimal for heating and cooling during the winter and summer.

Schaffarczyk said the difference between eco-friendly and

standard buildings is significant in terms of living healthy and saving energy.

"It would be like comparing a Bentley with a QQ – both might bring you from A to B and dry in case of rain, but there is indeed a huge difference," he said.

Schaffarczyk said the number of clients who are turning to them are increasing, especially in suburban villas.

"Building a new house is cheaper than refurbishing one," he said.

Improvement is in the details

Unlike many local design or architecture firms that appoint local contractors who leave quality to be desired, Schaffarczyk said his firm is very involved in on-site control.

The thinking goes it doesn't

matter how good a design is, if the workers aren't skillful enough to execute it, the result will be suboptimal.

Chow couldn't agree more.

"Erk is not only an architect, he's an experienced carpenter," Chow said. When a worker tells Chow they can't do something, Schaffarczyk demonstrates how it should be done.

Chow was extremely happy with his new drainage system.

"I checked with my neighbors in Nanluogu Xiang, and every store has drainage problems, but they don't exist in my new restaurant anymore," he said.

Chow is also proud of his restaurant's air filtration. The system allows a higher percentage of oxygen to flow through and be warmed by warm used air.

"The restaurant temperature is 25°C in the day and 20°C at night," Chow said.

When someone wants it a little warmer, that can be done with a turn of a dial. "I'm 100 percent happy with it," Chow said.

Ski resorts now open

By Annie Wei

Because the weather has been relatively mild, many ski resorts have pushed back their opening day to early next month.

The skiing season will also be shorter because Chinese New Year is earlier, on January 23, a time when resorts get very little business. As a result, most resorts are keeping their doors open later, until 9:30 pm, to maximize traffic.

Unfortunately, skiing fees have increased. Resorts like Huaibei charge 120 yuan on weekdays and 180 yuan on weekends, a 20 percent hike.

The change reflects a growing interest in skiing. There are foreign coaches at almost all the resorts. He Ping, chairman of Jundushan Skiing Resort, said some coaches even teach for free because their main goal is to introduce more Chinese to skiing.

Beijing Huaibei International Ski Resort

Located at Jiugugou, the site of the only rectangular tower on the Great Wall,

Huaibei boasts a 3,100-meter ski trail and a cable car that runs up to 1,200 meters (the highest in Beijing).

Accommodation is available.

How to get there:

It takes around an hour by car. The parking lot holds 800 cars.

Or take Bus 936 from Dongzhimen. Buses come every 30 minutes.

Open: 8 am - 9:30 pm

Tel: 8969 6677

Beijing Jundushan Ski resort

Jundushan Ski Resort is only 34 kilometers outside the city. It's located near Xiaotangshan hot spring holiday village, where a lot of people like to go after skiing.

Equipped for skiers and snowboarders, the resort features seven ski runs, a slalom run, double-seat cableway and cross-country path for snowmobiles.

How to get there:

Take Bus 345 or Bus 919 from Deshengmen.

Open: 8 am - 3:30 pm; 5:10 pm for night-skiing (cheaper)

Tel: 6072 5888

Beijing Nanshan Ski Resort

Nanshan, at 267 hectares, is one of the most recommended ski resorts. It's in the north of Miyun County, 67 miles away from Siyuan Bridge.

There are eight trails for beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers, as well as a trail for snowboarders, and a snow football ground for six players.

How to get there:

Take Dongmi express (Dongmizhuanxian) bus from Dongzhimen to Xidaqiao (buses come every five minutes), 10 yuan per person. Then take a taxi to Nanshan (about 10 yuan).

Nanshan arranges direct buses on Saturday and Sunday morning from the McDonald's at Ginza Mall in Dongzhimen. Buses leave at 8:30 am and come back at 5 pm. It costs 40 yuan per person. You can reserve a seat by calling 6445 0990 ext. 1316.

Open: 8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Tel: 6445 0991



Many ski resorts offer snowboarding and sledding in addition to skiing.

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The fourth forum held last Thursday
Photo provided by Storymaker



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Enlightenment never ends

By He Jianwei

There were two legends about Germans in the hometown of acclaimed Chinese writer Mo Yan. One was that Germans have no knees, and if you push one down he can't stand up. The other was that they had forked tongues, and the only way to learn German was to cut your tongue.

But racist misunderstandings did not run one-way. German paintings of Chinese people depicted them with peaked mouths, like birds, squatting in trees with their hair in a long braid.

While such imagery has thankfully been forgotten, other misunderstandings persist. To enhance the communication between the two cultures, The Enlightenment of Art opened in April at the National Museum of China. The yearlong project will help artists and scholars from Germany and China share their ideas about the Enlightenment and its effects on cross-cultural communication.

Rain caused temperatures in the capital to reach last Thursday, but the hall at the National Museum of China remained warm. Inside, professors were debating the European Enlightenment.

Gan Yang, head of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities at Sun Yat-sen University, said the Enlightenment had a profound effect on China, breaking down many superstitions between the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the May Fourth Movement of 1919.

But he cautioned against wholesale acceptance of Enlightenment thought as a new kind of superstition. "We should think rationally. It's time for us to rethink how we view the Enlightenment," he said.

Although both the audience and the German professors disagreed with his view, they praised the forum as a platform for an exchange of voices and ideas.

"The forum is an ideal platform for a joint debate of such differences, where we can talk in an open and honest manner rather than shrouded in confusion," said Wolf Lepenies, a professor from Free University of Berlin.

Lepenies cited French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss to emphasize the importance of differing opinions: "It is not the similarities which resemble one another but rather the differences." But the exhibition halls were comparatively desolate.

The exhibition is a collection of 600 paintings, sculptures, books, costumes and furniture from the Berlin State Museums, the Dresden State Art Collections and the Bavarian State Painting Collections in Munich.

It is divided into nine chapters that exemplify the ideas of the Enlightenment and demonstrate its influence on fine arts and its effects on history. The joint exhibition, held at the National Museum of China, is financed by the German Foreign Office and was one of the most important German-Chinese cultural exchanges agreed upon in 2005.

The organizers chose Gottlieb Schick's *Portrait of Heinrich Dannecker* as part of the exhibition. In the painting, a young woman sits on a bench in open air. It was drawn in 1862, the late years of Enlightenment in German literature.

Before the Enlightenment, European artists were raised and supported by the aristocracy. Drawings were made for the aristocracy and ordinary people rarely had the chance to ask painters to draw a portrait.

Dannecker was the wife of a Stuttgart court sculptor. Under the influence of the French Revolution, she wore a white blouse, red vest and blue dress, which alluded to the French colors of freedom.



Works by Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol included in the exhibition



Gottlieb Schick's Portrait of Heinrich Dannecker



CFP Photos

The boredom of modern marriage



Pamela Haag

By Charles Zhu

More over, *Feminine Mystique*, Pamela Haag's *Marriage Confidential*, an expose of the pain of "semi-marriage" "low-conflict marriage" and "melancholy marriage," is defining for a new generation what it means to be in wedlock.

The book – far from a common outlet for women with cheating husbands – tries to answer "why do people marry in the first place?"

Marriage Confidential draws on Haag's personal experience and her interviews with 50 people. For her research, Haag posed as a married person looking for love on the Internet and through personal ads in *The New York Review of Books*.

Haag, who has a Ph.D in history from Yale, has a triathlete husband who is the financial engineer of a commodities trading firm. But Haag sees their relationship as "boringly stable."

This personal experience gives the book convincing power, and her extensive research into the evolution and struggle of marriage demands profound contemplation of conventional beliefs.

The book on the modern marital state asks questions without providing answers. It does not hurl the stock feminist political and cultural attacks that typically accompany the topic.

Among the new terms she coins is "workhorse wives," a marital arrangement in which wives shoulder the family's financial burden while husbands engage in creative activities that do not generate any income.

But these marriages, like her own, are not necessarily unhappy.

"In my own case, I really can't tell if my marriage is woeful or sublime. Maybe I'm just so profoundly content that it feels like unhappiness, because nirvana is dull in this way, it lacks frisson," she writes.

Based on her own experience of marital pros and cons, she writes about couples who are redefining marriage to suit their relationships – especially couples with successful open marriages: the ones who swing and cheat.

Marriage as a philosophical term has political, economic and cultural connotations. It is most comprehensively manifested in John Updike's Rabbit novels, which depict how the change of time affects the marriage and sexual life of Angstrom during four decades.

Speaking about Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, Haag writes, the book "brilliantly and consequentially named the 'problem that has no name,' the vague marital melancholy that beset author Betty Friedan's own



Marriage Confidential: The Post-Romantic Age of Workhorse Wives, Royal Children, Undersexed Spouses and Rebel Couples Who Are Rewriting the Rules

By Pamela Haag, 352pp, Harper, \$25.99

age." Friedan focused on the entrenched political, social and economic oppression of women in her day.

Haag uses this to unravel the foundation of today's shaky marriage ideals to explain a semi-happy population of "melancholy" people. She probes the variety and degrees of melancholy that exist in today's marriages, while careful not to confuse it with the high-stress, "high-conflict marriage(s) which might involve abuse, violence, additions, fistfights, chronic arguments, projectile shoes and dishes or other conspicuously dysfunctional habits that lead to divorce."

Many readers might wonder why, given the opportunity and equality women have achieved since Friedan's time, marriages are no happier. Many husbands and wives are, in Haag's words, "trou-

bled by a feeling that there is something in their marriage that doesn't work, possibly cannot be made to work, and that it is not going to get any better."

"People who divorce from low-conflict but sad marriages to Good Guys and Wonderful Wives get little sympathy in our anti-divorce age," she says. "I take the humanist view that well-intentioned spouses in a marriage can contemplate a variety of ways to make their lives together more meaningful and happy."

The remarkable thing may be how little movement there has been to fix the antiquated ideal of marriage to bring it in line with modern expectations.

"There is no product in the world (except perhaps commercial Xerox machines) that has a 50 percent breakdown rate and is still in business," she says.

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.



Topics of Our Time

By E. H. Gombrich, 223pp, Phaidon Press, 280 yuan

This collection of essays reflects E. H. Gombrich's preoccupation with the central questions of value and tradition in our culture. His topics include radical proposals for the reform of higher education, an attack on relativism and a plea for the conservation of our cities, alongside thought-provoking and engaging studies of the work of Oskar Kokoschka, Abram Games, Saul Steinberg and Henri Cartier-Bresson.



European Cutlery Design 1948-2000

By W. O. Bauer, 176pp, Arnold-Sche, 525 yuan

After World War II, stainless steel was the working material preferred by cutlery designers. This collection features European designs from Scandinavia, the UK, France and Italy. New developments in technology, new materials and processes contributed just as much to the new cutlery culture after 1945 as changes in style, trends and fashions did.

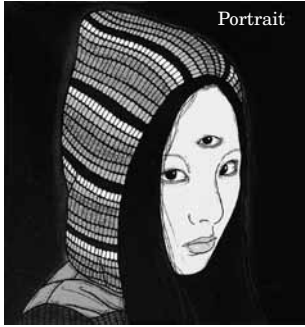


Harper's Bazaar Fashion

Edited by Lisa Armstrong and Meenal Mistry, 208pp, Hearst, 200 yuan

Through fabulous photos, including a gallery of gorgeous celebrity shots, from Kate Moss to Michelle Obama, Harper's *Bazaar Fashion* helps readers express their personality, create a "uniform" they can build on and choose the right pieces to put a distinctive stamp on their wardrobe.

(By He Jianwei)



Portrait

Grotesque, but beautiful

By He Jianwei

Chen Fei's latest exhibition tells a story through 17 paintings. Each looks like a scene from an imaginary film he calls "Stranger."

"The paintings are my script. I hope the audience can connect their own story after seeing them all so that I don't have to narrate," Chen said last Saturday at the opening ceremony in Today Art Museum.



Don't Worry



Traveller

Chen sees many parallels between film and painting: both require a script, carefully selected subjects and a cast of actors. His girlfriend always plays the lead in his paintings.

His new exhibition contains paintings set at night in familiar scenes. Playing on a scene from Steve Spielberg's *ET*, the painting *Stranger* shows a skeleton and a girl touching fingers. In Chen's *The Frog Prince*, the girl kisses a frog, but the frog does not become a prince.

Grotesque permeates his canvases. The 2008 work *Night Owl* shows his girlfriend carrying a bug-catching net through the forest at night, but rather than wild animals she is surrounded by dissected frogs and dragonflies with human organs.

Understandably, Chen's genre is hard to pin down.

It swings from horror, as in *Suddenly There's Snow Tonight*, *Old Man Straight* is *Lovable*, which shows a bloody arm coming out of a tractor, to hardcore pornography, as in *Go Home Early From School*, where a naked man tries to rape a middle school girl in a forest.

Born in 1983 in the village of Hongtong, Shanxi Province, Chen graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Beijing Film Academy.

Chen had displayed an interest and aptitude for painting from an early age. But Hongtong was backwater. His father believed that college was the only alternative to a life on the streets or a dead-end job at a local work site.

And so Chen was sent to Beijing to study painting at the age of 16.

During his time in school, Chen found his skills lagged behind his peers due to a visual style inspired by comic books, movies and Chinese New Year pictures. When the time came for college, he applied to the Beijing Film Academy with dreams of directing.

Watching films was one of his favorite activities in his hometown. He borrowed all the DVDs that the county had to offer, including Hong Kong crime films such as *Young and Dangerous* and Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberry*.

But the vanity and pretension of film school crushed his dreams.

He returned his focus to painting and became a professional artist, taking a prize in 2007 at the China New Painting Award, a competition to discover and promote young artists from the '80s generation.

Besides film, Chen cites Japanese comics as a primary influence – especially the works of horror comic author Kazuo Umezu.

"I love Umezu's *Fourteen Years* and *Left Hand of God, Right Hand of the Devil*. His works are a parable for human existence," Chen said.



The Frog Prince

Photos provided by Star Gallery



Night Owl



Stranger

Stranger – Chen Fei Solo Exhibition

Where: Building 3, Today Art Museum, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 30, 10 am – 5 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 5876 9804

Unique gifts from local designers

By Annie Wei

After two years of promoting original designs, Yang Yun, a 20-something Beijing woman, and her partner decided to start their own gift company, Xindingyi Culture and Media, to find new talents and promote their designs.

Yang recommends the following pieces for the holidays.

Zongzi wallet, 42 yuan

This wallet is a zipper in the shape of a zongzi, a glutinous rice dumpling. We like its candy colors that brighten up the winter. We suggest buying three or four in various colors to match other accessories like dark leather bags. Each can hold a different item, such as lip balm, makeup, coins or cash.



US dollar wallet, 86 yuan

You can use this wallet to hold any currency you want, but it looks like a roll of American bills. It's made of Tyvek, a light, tough and waterproof material.

Products designed by Bai Minghui are also available at his online store: oneday.cc.



Lovers' pillowcase, 120 yuan

The pillowcases are printed with images of angels and devils, adding some fun to bedtime.



Vinyl bowl, 256 yuan

Most people do not collect vinyl records anymore, so designer Bai Minghui has converted them into items like bowls. Be warned, though, these bowls aren't intended to hold food. The vinyl lamp (476 yuan) looks cool but only works with a 220-volt LED bulb.



Felt handbag, 498 yuan

Felt is an environmentally-friendly material, popular among young designers.

Where to shop:
Xindingyi Culture and Media
Tel: 13810218689

Delicious snacks at bite-sized prices

By Annie Wei

This week, *Beijing Today* has found great deals at two restaurants that offer small dishes that are huge on taste but won't dent the wallet.

Appreciating the beauty of sake with Japanese snacks

By Annie Wei

Since opening in 2005 as a small Japanese eatery in Panjiayuan, Sake Manzo has built a good reputation for its food and soju.

But owner Taka Yamamoto, 37, has always had a passion for sake.

Three months ago, Manzo moved into a more spacious place near Tuanjiehu on East Third Ring Road.

The place boasts more sake than you're able to try – at least in one night.

Yamamoto said his interest in sake began when he was a student at Beijing Foreign Studies University 12 years ago. He won a regional sake competition and learned from an experienced sake teacher, visiting factories to learn how sake is made.

Now Yamamoto is a certificated sake sommelier. "Like wine, sake has many grades," he said.

Like other imported food, Chinese consumers are taking interest in sake. Yamamoto's first job was 10 years ago as a salesman for Morita, a famous sake company. "Sake sales was only 2,000 yuan per month [back then], now it's

100,000 yuan," he said.

There are more than 10,000 sake brands in Japan, which means there are many differences in flavor.

Although sake is primarily made from rice and water, with alcoholic content of less than 15 percent, its manufacture is a complicated and delicate process. Most breweries are located in rural environments with clean air and pure spring water, Yamamoto said.

"The grading is based on the milling rate of the rice and the brewing method," he said. Most sakes are only standard or table sake; only a few with a high rice milling rate can give a smoother, silkier touch and better fragrance, and only with longer and more complex brewing methods can sake develop deep and unique tastes.

The most popular sake is Kubota (500 yuan for 720 milliliters, 1,200 yuan for 1,800 milliliters). But the most recommended one is Kame-nokou 22 percent (4,800 yuan), at the jumai-daiginjo grade, which prefers fermented from pure rice and is the highest. The "22 percent" refers to the



Rojo Hana Ari, 2,200 yuan

Photos provided by Sake Manzo

milling rate of rice, signaling that 78 percent of the rice has been milled.

"The inside part of rice, which is pure starch, is the best for making sake," Yamamoto said.

Another recommended sake is Rojo Hana Ari (2,200 yuan), a light and refreshing drink in a blue bottle painted with cherry blossoms, reviewed by Robert Parker as "the best sake in the world."

"The Japanese like drinking sake with a bit of food," Yamamoto said. His restaurant has developed many snacks that pair well with sake.

We recommend the grilled hokke (75 yuan). "This kind of fish is only available during winter, as it's the best time to eat," he said. The meat is well grilled, tender and delicious.

Deep fried fresh fish ball with octopus (35 yuan for three pieces) is also good. Chefs need to beat the meat very hard to make it chewy. Fish liver (35 yuan) is worth trying as well.

Yamamoto said his restaurant is all about slow food. "Apart from soy sauce and sake, we make everything from natural ingredients, and that takes a long time," he said.

Tofu used in the restaurant is freshly made every day. There are only 30 pieces per day of the restaurant's most

popular tofu dish, homemade basket tofu (20 yuan).

The restaurant's Nagoya style dishes are recommended, including miso-katsu (60 yuan), deep fried pork cutlets with miso sauces and topped with spring onions. The miso sauce has a special flavor, leading many restaurants to imitate.

Its organic vegetable dishes (50 yuan) are all seasonal, with ingredients from a farm called Runtian in suburban Beijing, under the care of organic expert Shinichi Sakai. Yamamoto, who has visited the farm, thinks the vegetables there are superior.

The restaurant's chef is a Chinese man who worked with Japanese chefs for many years before joining Manzo in 2005.

"I took him to Japan with me and arranged work for him in my friend's restaurant," Yamamoto said. "They said his dishes were of the same quality as that of Japanese chefs."

Sake Manzo

Where: Beisitiaoh, Tuanjiehu (walk east from Subway Line 10, Tuanjiehu station, into alley just east of the bus station), Chaoyang District

Open: 6 pm – midnight
Tel: 6436 1608



Magoya fried pork, 60 yuan



Homemade basket tofu, 20 yuan

Dim sum around Wangfujing

By Annie Wei

Wangfujing is a place to take first-timers in Beijing, though it's not exactly a go-to place for longtime residents. But if you're willing to give it another try, check out Chynna of Wangfujing Hilton, a Chinese restaurant that offers Peking duck at a reasonable price.

Its dim sum selection, with pieces starting from 20 yuan, is also recommended.

We like its crispy shrimp rice roll (28 yuan). The rice roll, also called changfen, is outstanding. The thin, transparent and silky rice roll is fresh, filled with tender shrimp and crispy youtiao, deep-fried pastry stick. This southern Chinese combo is seldom found in town.

You can also order changfen filled

with vegetables or barbecued pork.

Other typical dim sum items include shrimp dumplings (32 yuan), featuring delicious shrimp that's well steamed; egg tarts (20 yuan), crispy and warm; fengzhua, chicken claws (28 yuan), seasoned with black beans and chili.

For dessert, we recommend milk almonds (28 yuan), a Cantonese dessert available in many Taiwanese restaurants. Almonds from the US, are ground whenever a customer places an order. It pairs well with youtiao.

Chynna

Where: 8 Wangfujing Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm (dim sum is only available during lunch hours); 5-10 pm

Tel: 5812 8888



Egg tarts, 20 yuan



Crispy shrimp rice roll, 28 yuan

Photos provided by Chynna

Folk revival tour rolls into town

By He Jianwei

Last year, the indie label The 13 Month initiated a movement to revive folk music on the mainland, organizing a tour of eight cities. This year, the tour has expanded to 20 cities. It makes its stop tonight in Beijing, with 11 musicians scheduled to play at Star Live.

The label released its second compilation album earlier this month.



Chuan Zi (left) performing at last year's Folk on the Road. Ma Tiao is critical of the world we live in. Hao Fei'er (right) competed in 2006's Super Girl.

Folk music in China peaked in the late 1990s. Some believe it began with the release of the compilation album *Campus Folk Songs* in 1994 by a small label called Earth. The album featured college students and recent graduates singing about their campus life.

In Chinese tradition, music is closely connected with literature. For instance, lyrics to songs from the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties have become classics in Chinese literature. College musicians inherited the tradition, and their style attracted many fans.

But in a short matter of time, folk musicians stopped writing about campus life. They moved on to bigger topics like social issues.

The 43-year-old musician Chuanzi complains about reality and yearns for a better future in his

new album *I Want to Get Married*, released in May.

In the title song, he depicts the phenomenon of leftover men and women – older singles still looking for a spouse. “I want to get married. How can I marry you? I have neither house nor money, but we have fallen in love,” he sings.

Chuanzi began studying how to play the guitar when he was in prison. He was sentenced to 13 years for brawling when he was 19. His father gave him a guitar and asked him not to waste any more of his life.

He was set free after eight years and eight months. He wrote more than 100 songs in prison, reflecting on his past and what he expected in the future.

In 2007, The 13 Month signed him. His debut album, *Destiny*, was released two years later.

Like Chuanzi, Ma Tiao from Karamay, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is also critical of the world we live in. In his latest single, “Cut the Cake,” Ma questions school education. “When asked what we’re learning, I was told that I studied to cut the cake. We have ideals. We are educated. We are minded. We are virtuous. Let’s cut, cut and cut,” he sings.

The concert also includes Zhong Lifeng, who draws inspiration from film and literature, Ma Fei, who sings in Xi’an dialect, and Hao Fei’er, who finished in the Top 20 in 2006’s *Super Girl*, a national singing competition.

This year’s tour follows up on the success of last year’s tour.

“The revival of folk music is related to the decline of rock music. The rock scene on the mainland

does not dominate the market any more, after its peak that brought many stars such as Dou Wei, Zhang Chu and He Yong. There’s space for folk musicians,” said Lu Zhongqiang, founder of the record company.

Many rock and pop musicians imitate music from Europe, the US, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong, he said, but most folk songs are distinctly Chinese.

Folk on the Road

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 80 yuan and 105 yuan (includes a CD) with advance purchase, 130 yuan and 180 yuan (includes a CD) at the door
Tel: 6402 5080

CFP Photos

Photo provided by Mosh.com





“History is written by the people.”

By Zhang Dongya

In 1872, the Qing imperial court sent 30 students to study in the US. The program, which would eventually send 120 boys between the ages of 10 and 16, was part of a series of reforms pushed through in the twilight years of the dynasty.

But the plan was scrapped in 1881 and the students were recalled.

Hu Jingcao's five-episode film *Boy Students* traces the stories of these first students using photos, letters, diaries and newspaper clippings from the students and their host families. Their stories show a period of Sino-US relations buried in the dust for more than a century.



Director Hu Jingcao (middle) finding the best materials in the care of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Photo provided by CCTV.com

The Qing's US-educated scholars

When the first batch of 30 Chinese boys arrived in San Francisco in 1872, US newspapers referred to them as “girls” because of their long braids.

For most Americans, this report was their first encounter with a person from China. There were many questions, especially about the students' hairstyles and purpose.

One student named Li Enfu wrote excitedly in his diary of new inventions such as trains, piped gas, tap water and elevators. Although most people in the US were struggling to keep up with the Industrial Revolution, the boys adapted easily.

The film shows the details of their lives with their American host families and their academic performance. Many of the students traveled frequently, writing about places and people in the country.

“It was easy for us to access historical records and documents from this era,” director Hu Jingcao said at the Caihuoche Culture Saloon last Sunday.

Hu, director of the News Programming Center of CCTV, said she felt great pressure when she was given the documentary assignment in 2002. At the time, little was known about these students aside from a handful of photos in the hands of Taiwanese scholars.

That changed when her team arrived in the US.

The group got in touch with a historical society that had collected and archived numerous materials related to



The first batch of 30 Chinese boys, before they were sent to the US

the students. The team spent three months going through these materials and interviewing people in the US as preparation for the project.

“The most valuable information for this film was found in the US. In our country, the topic is basically a blank slate,” Hu said.

The students were eventually taken to the country's northeast to attend high school in Connecticut and Massachusetts and prepare for college.

The film team found the best materials in the hands of the Connecticut Historical Society, which preserved the students' clothing, including their long gowns, socks and hats, as well as several old photos.

The most stunning piece was a collection of newspaper clippings, all copied by hand, about their arrival in 1872. The collection was created by a senior librarian named

King, who was living in a retirement home.

King spent her time reviewing old newspapers in the library and jotting down stories she thought were likely to be forgotten. When she stumbled across the story about the Chinese students, she decided to copy all the reports by hand. Her colleague joined the project and helped with compiling an index of Chinese names.

Their work proved essential to preserving the stories of the 120 students.

For Hu, one of the greatest challenges was trimming down the stories of the students. Many returned home to achieve great success, becoming founders of the Chinese rail and telegraph industries.

“A historian could fill a book about Tang Shaoyi, the Republic's first Prime Minister in 1912, but I am here to create a bridge between that

history and the audience, who can only digest a small part,” she said.

Hu focused on anecdotes and details that cannot be easily found in textbooks or other published sources.

Among these was the story of Shi Jinyong, one of the first students sent out in 1872. Hu's team found one of his letters and business cards at Monson Academy, the old school where Yung Wing, the first Chinese student to graduate from a US university, had studied. The team was very interested in the boy, but found little about him.

Shi was recalled home one year after he wrote a letter to a girl. On the way back to the country, he cut his hair and began wearing “Western-style” clothing, becoming one of the group's first rebels.

“The most touching part for me was the American people's attitude towards history. Even the stories of

ordinary people are preserved. It's much better than in our country,” Hu said.

“Our country doesn't have much respect for the history of common people. Sometimes we find valuable files are being hawked at Panjiayuan rather than cataloged in the library. Many important documents are sold by official departments as bulk trash. The amount of history we destroy is stinging,” said Lei Yi, a historian.

In 1881, all the students were recalled home. Only two students finished college in the US, one being Zhan Tianyou, a graduate of Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and

the engineer of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou Railway, China's first constructed in 1905.

Since China reopened to the world in 1978, the government has resumed the practice of sending top students abroad. As many as 1 million students have left to study abroad during the past three decades.

It would be difficult to say whether China's development during the early 20th century would have been even slower without the contributions of those 120 students.

Caihuoche Culture Saloon

Where: 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District
Getting there: Take Subway Line 2 to Andingmen Station and walk to south, or take Subway Line 5 to Beixinqiao Station and walk to north. You can also take bus 104 to Fangjia Hutong.
Tel: 6406 0658

Little-known gems of ancient towns



By Zhang Dongya

You may have heard that China has 5,000 years of history. Undoubtedly, this country is full of famous ancient towns, like Wuzhen and Xitang in the south. But there are several lesser-known towns that are just as old and just as worth checking out.

Kongcheng, Anhui Province and Xuanhua, Hebei Province are two examples.

Kongcheng is a river town north of the Yangtze River, while Xuanhua in northern China features defensive city walls and historical sites. Both have added modern amenities in recent years, but residents there still value their ancient elements.

Ancient street reopened in Kongcheng

Kongcheng, in Tongcheng, Anhui Province, dates back to the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771BC). During the Northern Song (960-1127), it became famous in the area called Jiangbei, translated literally as "north of the river" – the Yangtze River. Buildings today are mostly from the late Qing (1644-1911) and the Republic of China (1912-1949) periods.

The town is famous for a 2-kilometer street with dozens of lanes and alleys. It is the longest ancient street in the province.

After restoration, the old street opened last month as part of a neighborhood project that included the building of a resort. Many shops on the street house craftsmen showing intangible cultural heritage skills as well as products. Some old crafts, which have played a great role in Kongcheng in the past, have been revived. A five-star hotel, which is expected to cater to thousands of people, is under construction.

The old street cuts through the city and divides it into western and eastern halves.

Standing at Duhui Bridge at the end of the street, one will see that the town is like a peninsula, with three sides surrounded by water. Kongcheng used to be an important dock, and though shipping stopped half a century ago, moors are still

around. Some small and narrow alleys lead to quays at the edge of town. There are several old docks around Duhui Bridge.

Under Duhui Bridge flows Sanba River, a tributary of Kongcheng River. Because it often rains around these parts, plants grow abundantly around the river.

Kongcheng has a two-month wet season every year, with rains broadening the river and sometimes causing Duhui Bridge to flood. A new bridge is now being built to be used during flood season.

Shipping on Kongcheng's river has been halted for half century, but the environment and atmosphere remain.

The old street has been divided into 10 blocks, each with its unique commercial characteristics. Currently, one can see big blanks on the street, which will be filled in eventually. Developers have invited artists to create murals, oil paintings, sculptures, print and installations. They've painted walls, gates, doors, pillars and beams, combining traditional Anhui aesthetics with modern art.

In the street, one will see many large yards that house huge families. There are also small temples, nunneries, ancestral halls, academies and inns. All the buildings reflect Kongcheng's past. Now, they are all restored with new gates.

One block features old handicrafts, salted vegetable jars, products to commemorate the dead, sickles and other farm implements.

Continued on page 21...



1. Kongcheng has the longest ancient street in Anhui Province.
2. Yangko performance
3. Traditional Anhui dwellings in Tongcheng
4. Cotton craftsman

Photos by Tongcheng



Murals found in the Liao Dynasty tombs in Xuanhua

...continued from page 20

Folk performances like the yangko, a rural folk dance, are often staged.

Locals still live in the old houses behind the shops. They wash clothes in the river and sit on the stones to chat. They are curious about the new art and non-local snacks that have made their way to the seventh block.

The restored town received more than 20,000 visitors on its opening day. Developers are targeting people who live within 500 kilometers. They are going to make a play set in the old river and old street in the future.

Getting to Kongcheng: Take train K1071 to Tongcheng, which takes 15 hours. Then take a taxi to Kongcheng Old Street.

Tel: 0556-6135 677 / 6515 888

Admission: Free

Xuanhua, a modern town mingled with the past

Visitors to Xuanhua in Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, will find a typical Chinese town. But compared to other areas in Hebei, this place seems more bustling thanks to its heritage.

Xuanhua dates back to the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC) and got its present name during the Qing. It has ancient cultural sites, tombs and temples from different dynasties.

At the center of the commercial street, you'll see a high ancient building called Qingyuan Building. Built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it is 500 years old. The tower has a huge bell that weighs 5,000 kilograms – it's thus called the Bell Tower. It's said that the bell could be heard up to 20 kilometers away. You can find an inscription

of the Qinglong Emperor here.

About 200 meters to the south is Zhen-shuo Building, also built during the Ming. It features a large drum and is a landmark building in Xuanhua.

There is also the Xuanhua Building, first built during the Tang (618-907). It's a square-shaped city with high walls and seven gates.

In Xuanhua, you can also see a beautiful Catholic church. Its Gothic architecture is very rare in Hebei.

A big attraction is the Liao Dynasty tombs in north Xuanhua's Xiabali Village. The tombs there come in many different shapes. Hundreds of antiques were unearthed around here, including porcelain, pottery, carpentry and lacquer ware. The most valuable piece is a colored star atlas painted with 268 celestial bodies, including the sun, the moon and five planets – Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

Other historical sites are scattered around town. The Hall of Shi'en Temple is located northwest of Zhen-shuo Building. A large shadow wall called Five-Dragon Wall is inside the Zhangjiakou Education School Xuanhua Branch. It was once an old temple. Lihuasi Pagoda, an octahedral pagoda built in Lihua Temple, is now an army barracks.

Getting to Xuanhua: There are about 10 trains between Beijing and Zhangjiakou, all of which pass through Xuanhua. It takes about three hours, and the average ticket price is 20 yuan.

Tel: 0313-3012 954



Catholic church in Xuanhua

Photo by Conj



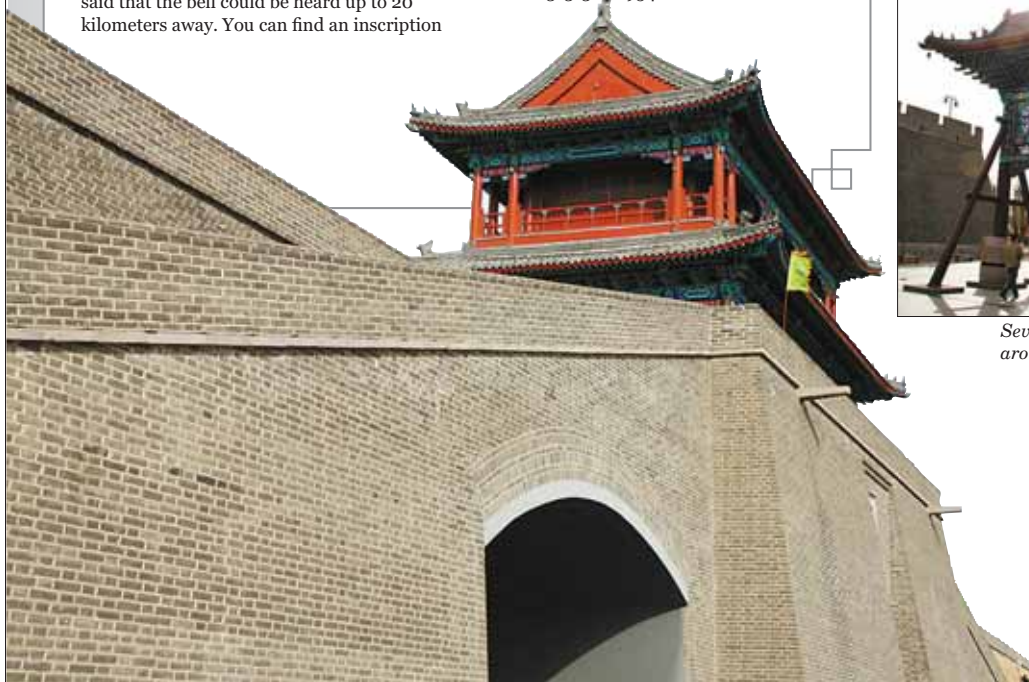
Zhen-shuo Building is a landmark in Xuanhua

Photo by Macsong



Several historical sites are scattered around the town.

Photo by Tata



Erasers the new DIY medium for stamp artists



Baby Erason, a small studio of eraser sculpting

pattern will be inverted on the stamp, so the first step is using carbon paper to reverse the image," Xiong says.

Because of the soft nature of erasers, getting smooth lines is a challenge, Xiong says. But within 20 minutes he had fashioned a Winnie the Pooh stamp.

"The people who are interested in this skill tend to be very creative. I have many clients, and they want these kinds of stamps to use on their New Year's cards or to give to their friends as special gifts," Xiong says.

No matter whether the erasers come out beautiful, they are unique. Many use them as seals to put their own personalized stamps on cards, but jeans and t-shirts.

A Chongqing netizen "TTYR" is selling many of her creations online. Most of the custom stamps and sculptures cost less than 60 yuan, and she sends three to five orders abroad each day.

Most of her stamps are animal themed; the most popular are bunnies, dogs, kittens, lizards and spiders. Each stamp is handmade and tested before shipping.



Photos by Luo Jie

By Luo Jie

Cao Yulun has a special birthday gift for her best friend: a homemade eraser sculpture.

She went to a stationery store, bought several small knives and a large eraser. At home, she drew a small picture of one of the characters from the movie *Lilo and Stitch* and began cutting.

"Eraser sculpture is much easier than wood sculpture because the material is so soft. It doesn't require such skill," Cao said.

The hobby is becoming popular among young Chinese who are

looking for personalized gifts on a budget. One Douban group with 2,000 members allows sculptors to post pictures of their work and share tips.

Some are turning it into a business.

Xiong Ping recently opened Baby Erason, a small studio by Gulou East Avenue where he teaches weekend classes in eraser sculpting.

For his demonstration, Xiong made a Winnie the Pooh rubber stamp. "The

Websites for eraser hobbyists

1. Xiangpi Stamps

This one-stop website provides newcomers with a free tutorial video and textbooks. It also catalogs reliable places to purchase knives and erasers. For more devoted fans, it holds monthly exhibitions and courses for those who are interested in woodblock printing.

Website: douban.com/group/xiangpi

2. Life of Eraser Stamps

This is an online retailer and wholesaler for block erasers, knives, stamp frames and pigments. People with experience can find some of the best imported color erasers, pigments and design patterns there.

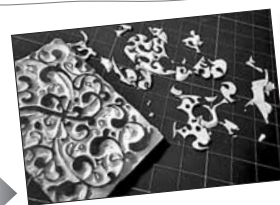
Website: diyrbustamp.taobao.com

3. Lanbing Eraser

Providing free digital textbooks and videos of A-to-Z courses about eraser sculpting, this site suits beginners and these with a carving background.

Website: douban.com/people/3038984

(by Chu Meng)



Dinning



Australian stockyard beef steak

Café Swiss is preparing the most sumptuous servings of Australian Stockyard beef with the finest prime cuts of 250-day-old grain-fed Australian Angus Beef, grilled to order!

Try our 150-day-old prime grain-fed beef for a different taste with a glass or two of red wine.

Where: Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2127



Christmas tea at the Grand Millennium's Lobby Lounge

Our traditional Christmas afternoon tea is an assortment of traditional holiday drinks. Relax enjoy a mug of tea, hot chocolate or Glühwein. The experience is made all the better with our

holiday decor and relaxing music.

Afternoon tea is the ideal way to relax and spend time with friends. What better time to do so than during the holidays?

Where: Lobby Lounge, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu

When: November 18 - December 26, 2:30-5:30 pm, reservations encouraged

Cost: 138 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3011



Chynna winter promotion

Lamb is one of the most popular winter meats, and China's diverse cooking methods offer a lot of options. The rich and nutritious meat contains valuable proteins and vitamins that the body needs. The chef at Chynna has designed a range of delicacies. For 168 yuan, you can enjoy the recommend stewed lamb brisket with dried tofu sticks. They are good for the kidneys and help boost circulation.

Chynna's chefs are also preparing stewed turtle with winter mushrooms and bamboo shoots, sticky rice with cured meat, pot rice with cured duck and sausage, sautéed cured meat with spinach, pot rice with cured chicken and sausage, steamed cured meat and chicken and stewed lamb with lovage and Chinese angelica.

Where: Chynna, Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Dajie

Cost: 168 yuan per person

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 84

Airline



BA's iPad success inspires worldwide rollout

British Airways customers around the world will benefit from a new level of customer service thanks to thousands of iPads being issued to the airline's cabin crew starting next week.

The move comes after a highly successful trial, involving 100 senior crew members working aboard the airline's 226 aircraft.

Specially developed software and apps enable the cabin crew to tap into data about customer preferences and previous travel arrangements, allowing a uniquely personalized service.

The three-month-long trial was judged such a flyaway success that new iPad 2s will be issued to another 2,000 senior cabin crew members across the airline's long and shorthaul fleet.

"The possibilities for future development of the iPad are endless, and this is only the beginning," said Frank van der Post, British Airways' managing director of brands and customer experience. "Once the roll-out has been completed, our crew will be able to offer more thoughtful on-board service to customers in every cabin."

Hotel

Swissotel Hotels & Resorts expands to Chengdu

Swissotel Hotels & Resorts is adding a new luxury hotel to its Chinese portfolio: the Swissotel Chengdu in Sichuan Province.

With hotels in Shanghai, Beijing, Foshan and Kunshan, the Swissotel Chengdu will be the Chain's fifth hotel on the Chinese mainland and its first in the country's Western interior.

Swissotel Chengdu will have 380 rooms, four classy restaurants and bars and 10 conference rooms large enough to host any event. The spacious Pürovel Spa & Sport invites guests to relax and unwind.

"We are delighted to have signed a manage-

ment contract with the Chengdu Senyu Industrial Group," said Meinhard Huck, the company's president. "The phenomenal growth of the Chinese market means China is becoming increasingly important for us."

The hotel is expected to open at the end of 2014.

Marriott International expands global sales network to Guangzhou

Marriott International announced its 100th hotel in China and the expansion of its global sales office network with a new office in Guangzhou.

"Marriott International has 56 operating hotels in Greater China with 44 projects in the pipeline.

Our China hotel network is growing at a tremendous pace and is set to open one hotel per month for the next three years," said John Toomey, vice president of Global Sales North Asia.

The sales team's task will be to drive revenue to Marriott hotels through online bookings and packages.

"China has become a major source market for both inbound and outbound business for both business and leisure travelers. It is a logical move to enhance our global sales infrastructure and continue to invest more resources," Toomey said. "These investments will not only support our hotels in this region, but also other Marriott hotels around the globe."

(By Jackie Zhang)

Fri, Nov. **25**



Concert Ramzi Yassa Piano Recital

This Egyptian pianist studied at the Cairo Conservatory and later in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory and was the first Egyptian pianist to win the important Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition in Paris.

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-380 yuan

Tel: 5166 1145

Nightlife Zhang Qianqian

Zhang is a folk singer, writer, visual artist and film actress who performs songs that will warm the soul.

Where: Gulou 121 Bar, 121 Jiu Gulou Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 8404 3430

Sat, Nov. **26**



Nightlife Origin

Born in the 1990s, folk singer Wang Shengnan cares more about individual attitudes toward life's pressures. She began humming melodies when she was just 5 years old. She began learning guitar at 15 and won a contract with a folk music label at 19.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door

Tel: 5205 1112

Movie

The Sun Beaten Path

Based on a true story, this film is about a young Tibetan who loses his mother in a motorcycle accident. The young man is unable to shake the feeling that he was responsible for her death. Seeking to cleanse his guilt, he sets out on a pilgrimage to Lhasa.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8001



Dance Feng

This is the latest work from the local modern dance company SMX Studio. The performance seeks to break the boundaries between dancers and the audience.

Where: Nine Theater (TNT), Chaoyang Culture Center, 12 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-200 yuan, 50 yuan for students

Tel: 8599 1188

Sun, Nov. **27**



Mon, Nov. **28**



Exhibition

The Remolded Self

This exhibition presents oil paintings by Taiwanese artist Tang Jo-hung, exploring his internal subjectivity through self-portraits.

Where: Mountain Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 4, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6431 9498

Tue, Nov. **29**



Exhibition

Ember – Zhu Xinyu Solo Exhibition

Born in 1980 in Liaoning Province, Zhu Xinyu graduated from Lu Xun Fine Arts Academy. He takes an immense interest in nature and old buildings because the place he was born, raised and educated used to be a hub of heavy industry. Calm and tranquil on the surface, his works are in fact filled with emotion.

Where: Art Seasons Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 12, 2012, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9850

Wed, Nov. **30**

Exhibition

Floating Ice Biography – Lu Lei Solo Exhibition

This exhibition presents Hangzhou-based artist Lu Lei's multimedia installation, comprising electronics, heating, refrigeration and petroleum.

Where: Other Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 11, daily except Monday, 11 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6431 9684

Thu, Dec. **1**

Movie

The Princess of Montpensier (2010)

Set in the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598), this film tells about a young woman who is forced into marriage while passionately in love with another man.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 5900 9473

(By He Jianwei)

